



THE PASTORAL HUB BULLETIN

SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

DECEMBER 2024

Dear Parents and Carers

We wanted to send our best wishes to all of our students and their families. A new year is upon us and a new chance to move forward, achieve goals and get the bets out of our young people.

We look forward to seeing you all in the new year, but in the meantime, we hope some of this information and guidance may help you get through the Christmas break.

Merry Christmas to you all. Stay safe, stay healthy, look after yourselves

Mrs Boussida (Deputy Headteacher) & Mrs Sharpe (DSL and Safeguarding Manager)



Everywhere you look on television, in magazines and shops there are images and stories designed to promote the image of an idyllic Christmas. This has become even more widespread with the growth of social media. We know people often only share the positive or best bits of their celebrations, but it can still leave us feeling like everyone else is having a better time than we are. If you find yourself constantly comparing your family Christmas to what you see online, consider taking a break from social media for a little while.

Instead, concentrate on talking with your family about what's really important. You might all have different preferences for Christmas activities and food for example, but working with your family to plan how you want your Christmas to look can help. For more on this, see this article from Family Action [How to manage the expectations of children at Christmas.](#)



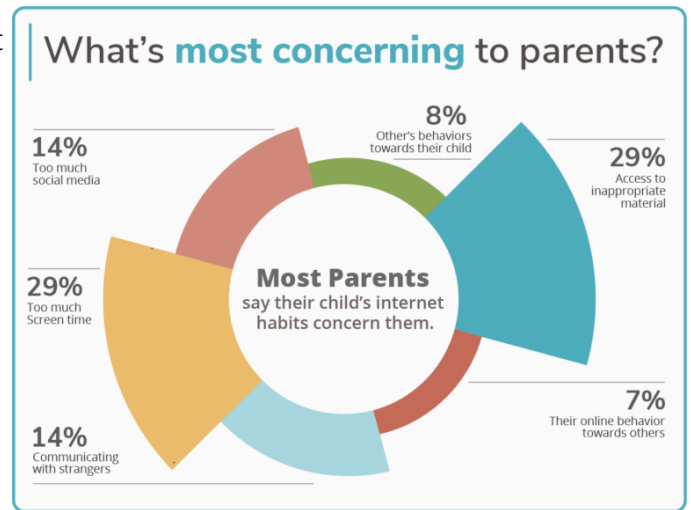
INTERNET SAFETY AND YOUNG PEOPLE ONLINE



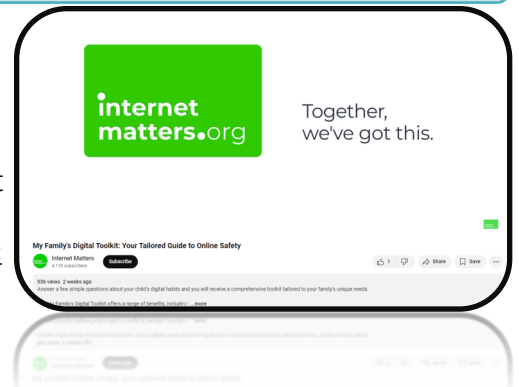
We know that Christmas is the number one time when young people receive new devices. As parents it can be tricky to keep up to date with all the new apps and advances in technology.

We are often torn between not wanting our young people to spend too much time online, but realising that the world and how young people socialise and access information is rapidly changing too and so we do not want to deprive them of this social contact.

But you are not alone if you have worries or concerns about your child's internet habits.



So, we encourage parents to have open and honest dialogue with your children about keeping safe and being responsible online. Internet Matters have put together a digital tool kit that can be used by parents to get targeted advice based on your child (children's ages and online activities) Click the picture to the right to watch a short video about the tool kit, or click here to sign up for the toolkit: [My Family's Digital Toolkit - tailored online safety advice | Internet Matters](#)



The ABC safety checklists are also a great way to talk to your child and make plans together about their online usage. [Your-ABC-online-safety-checklist- -Internet-Matters.pdf](#)

All ages Under 5 6-10 **11-13** 14+

ABC online safety checklist for 11-13s

If your child is now a pre-teen, explore the actions you can take to keep them safe with the checklist below.

Activate

- Create child profiles on [platforms they use](#). ☐
- Limit chat and data sharing on [online games](#) like Roblox and Minecraft. ☐
- Limit [smartphone features](#) to essential apps only. ☐
- Review [privacy settings](#) on social media together. ☐
- Use family or parent modes on platforms with social features to supervise use, like [TikTok Family Pairing](#) (13+ only) and [Roblox Allowed Experiences](#). ☐

Balance

- Encourage children to [explore a range](#) of different types of media. ☐
- Help them [balance](#) active (creating) and passive (watching) screen time. ☐
- Help them review how much time they spend on devices (based on the tools you use) to help them learn balance. ☐
- Encourage them to be selective about what they do online. ☐

Check

- Check if apps are right for their [age and maturity](#) level. ☐
- Talk about ways to [deal with online reputation](#), [screen time use](#) and [cyberbullying](#). ☐
- Ask them to show you how they use their apps and discuss safety measures. ☐
- Ask them what they share online and how it makes them feel. ☐
- Discuss ways to [protect their privacy](#) on different platforms. ☐

All ages Under 5 6-10 **11-13** 14+

ABC online safety checklist for teens

As teens gain more independence, there are still areas in which they need support. Use the checklist below to review their online safety.

Activate

- Review [privacy settings](#) on social media together. ☐
- Use family or parent modes on platforms with social features to supervise use, like [TikTok Family Pairing](#) and [Snapchat Family Centre](#). ☐

Balance

- Show them how to [use screen time tools](#) to check their device and app usage. ☐
- Encourage them to be selective about what they do online. ☐
- Empower teens to watch and follow a range of content types to avoid falling into [echo chambers](#). ☐

Check

- Ask them to show you how they use their apps and discuss safety measures. ☐
- Ask them what they share online and how it makes them feel. ☐
- Discuss ways to [protect their privacy](#) on different platforms. ☐
- Together, review how to [report users and content](#) on the platforms they use. ☐

What Parents & Carers Need to Know about SETTING UP APPS, GAMES AND SOFTWARE

Millions of new phones, tablets, laptops and games consoles will be nestling under Christmas trees this year. However, even if parents and carers have gone to the trouble of setting up these new devices and enabling the safety features, there are still potential hazards in the apps, games and software that children will want to install and use. Knowing what to look for and discussing those risks with your child may help avoid any nasty surprises this Christmas. Here are our top tips for ensuring that unwrapping this year's presents doesn't unleash any unexpected dangers.

TAKE NOTE OF AGE RATINGS

Back when most games were bought in shops, checking the age rating was easy: it was on the front of the box. Now that most games are downloaded, it's tougher – but not impossible. All reputable download stores show a game's age rating at the point of purchase, and you can check the suitability of a specific title your child wants to play at videostandards.org.uk/RatingBoard/games.

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'FREE' ISN'T ALWAYS FREE

The games market has changed radically in recent years. Many titles are free to download, but then tempt players to pay for cosmetic items (as in Fortnite) or to unlock additional content. There can be huge peer pressure for children to pay for these items. Agree a budget for in-game purchases before the game is downloaded, and make sure children can't authorise in-game purchases by themselves.

DISABLE IN-APP PURCHASING

It's not wise to leave children with devices that can make in-app purchases without your permission. Ideally, set up computers, consoles and phones so child accounts need an adult's authorisation to buy anything. On shared devices (like iPads, which don't allow user accounts), check the settings to ensure that in-app purchasing requires the account holder's password, fingerprint or face ID.

CHECK THE SPECS

To avoid let-downs, check a game's specs before buying – especially for PC or Mac, where games often need a particular graphics chip or processor to work. Sites like systemrequirementslab.com can scan your computer to see if it will run certain games properly. On consoles, make sure you're buying the right version: some newer Xbox or PlayStation games won't play on older consoles.

MONITOR IN-GAME COMMS

Voice chat with friends is part of the fun of modern gaming – but danger lurks here too. Many titles have open chat systems, meaning that children could speak to strangers or hear adult language and verbal abuse when games get particularly competitive. Using a shared family area (as opposed to alone in bedrooms) for online gaming is a good way to keep an occasional ear on what's being said.

BE WARY OF GIFTS

Titles like Roblox, Minecraft and Fortnite have in-game currencies, which can be earned through progress in the game – but can also be bought with real money. A common scam is for a young player to be offered currency if they click a link, visit a certain site or contact another user directly. Warn your child about such offers; they should show you if they're in any doubt over an in-game gift.

APPS ARE AGE RATED, TOO

Like games, apps in the major stores have age ratings, too – so you can see in advance whether an app's appropriate for your child. Additionally, phones' parental control settings allow you to set age limits, preventing young ones from downloading unsuitable apps themselves. These ratings aren't infallible, however: we've seen TV apps featuring adult shows with an age rating of 3, for example.

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CONSIDER STORAGE

Most apps and games will tell you in the online store how much space they need on a device. Check this carefully – especially with games, which can run into hundreds of megabytes and beyond. If you don't have enough free storage on a device to run the game or app, you won't get a refund from the store. You can normally check a device's available storage space through the settings menu.

WATCH OUT FOR IMITATORS

Even in the official stores, untrustworthy rogue apps can slip through the net. Common tricks are apps or games that have a slightly different name to the genuine article (Fortnite rather than Fortnite, for instance) or use logos which deliberately look very similar to the official app. To avoid downloading these imitations, read the app's description and check who the publisher is listed as.

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LEGAL APPS THAT BREAK THE LAW

There are many apps that are perfectly legal but enable illegal activity – streaming apps which let people watch football matches, say, without paying for Sky or BT Sport. Prosecution for using such apps is rare, but they can lead to risky behaviour like viewing rogue streams on sites teeming with malicious links. Watch for children installing unusual apps with 'TV', 'stream' or 'sport' in the name.

IN-APP REGISTRATION

It's common for apps and games to ask users to register: entering personal details like email address, date of birth and other information you might not want your child to divulge. Ask them to get your permission before giving any personal info to an app – and consider using your details rather than the child's, so they're not targeted by marketing spam or put at risk of having their data stolen.

STAY UPDATED

Most games and apps are subject to regular updates, which not only offer new content and features but also provide critical security improvements. Children tend to ignore such updates – usually because they don't understand why they're important, or they simply want to get straight on with gaming. Check your child's devices periodically to make sure these updates are being installed.

Meet Our Expert

Barry Collins has been a technology journalist and editor for more than 20 years, working for titles such as the *Sunday Times*, *Which?*, *PC Pro* and *Computeractive*. He's appeared regularly as a technology pundit on television and radio, including on *Newsnight*, *Radio 5 Live* and *ITV News at Ten*. He has two children and has written regularly about internet safety issues.



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Do not suffer in silence this Christmas period.

Samaritans 116 123

Age UK - 0800 678 1602

Alcoholics Anonymous - 0800 917 7650

Cruse Bereavement Care - 0808 808 1677

Men's Adviceline - 0808 801 0327

Narcotics Anonymous - 0300 999 1212

National Debt Helpline - 0808 808 4000

NHS 111

Relate Relationship Support - 0300 003 0396

Shelter - 0808 800 4444

Shout (confidential text service) 85258

Women's Adviceline - 0808 200 0247

Emergency Services / Police 999



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Aged 11-18?

Need someone to talk to?

Free, safe and anonymous online chat, advice and support for young people.

kooth.com

kooth

How are you feeling today?

I'm feeling stressed...



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HEALTH^{FOR}TEENS

EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT

HEALTH | RELATIONSHIPS | FEELINGS | LIFESTYLE

GROWING UP | BUT DIDN'T WANT TO ASK.

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DON'T FORGET THAT THE IVANHOE WEBSITE HAS LINKS TO MANY TRUSTED WEBSITES AND ORGANISATIONS THAT YOU CAN APPROACH FOR SUPPORT ON A HUGE RANGE OF TOPICS AFFECTING YOUNG PEOPLE.

Support and Wellbeing | Ivanhoe School

CONCERNS OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL HOURS

We seek to do everything we reasonably can to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our students. I am sure you will appreciate that there are limits to this outside of school hours and especially during the holidays.

We would therefore recommend that you:

- Monitor closely your child's activity on social media. Most of the problems we have to deal with at the start of each term relate to antisocial behaviour that has taken place online during the holidays. If your child is being seriously abused online, contact the police. <https://www.ivanhoe.co.uk/protecting-your-child-online>
- Let us know if there have been any issues that we need to be aware of as soon as possible so we can respond promptly and appropriately when school reopens. We cannot guarantee that we will be able to respond to emails etc. out of school hours.
- Contact Social Services if you feel they should be aware of an issue.

You can call the Social Services Central Duty Team on 016 305 0005 or

make an online referral via the following link <https://www.leicestershire.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-safety/report-abuse-or-neglect-of-a-child>

- Contact the police on 999 straight away if you believe a child is in immediate danger.